

**Testimony by Janice Milton**  
**Before the Appropriations Committee of the Connecticut Legislature**  
**February 17, 2009**

Good evening. My name is Janice Milton. I am a resident of Corbin Heights Pinnacle Heights Extension, a state public housing community in New Britain. I am a leader of the Public Housing Resident Network – PHRN for short – Resident Council at Corbin Pinnacle.

I am a single Mom with 2 kids. My oldest son is a student at the University of Connecticut. I have worked at UPS for 22 years. The last 11 years has been part-time because my position was outsourced. Due to the state of the economy, I am worried that I could be laid off at any moment.

I am here tonight for 2 reasons.

First, as you know, Governor Rell removed housing PILOT's from her 2010 and 2011 proposed state budgets. We need you to put those housing PILOT's back. My community is one that will be greatly affected if housing PILOT's are not restored. Our rents will increase on average about \$40 per month – \$480 per year – if PILOT is not put back in the budget.

Second, I am here to urge you to restore funding for the Connecticut Fair Housing Center to the state budget.

About a year ago, our resident group pushed for CHFA to open up some of the boarded up units at Corbin Pinnacle because so many families in New Britain were in need of affordable housing. Approximately 25 units were rehabbed and management began accepting applications. I encouraged family members to apply for the units. My family is very diverse; we are from many different ethnic backgrounds. Some members of my family were given applications when they applied for vacant units, others were denied applications. The difference in treatment seemed to be related to the difference in ethnic background of each.

We knew this was wrong. We met with management to discuss the situation. We were not taken seriously. We met with Erin Kemple, Executive Director of the Connecticut Fair Housing Center. She took us seriously. She met with our leadership group and educated us about fair housing law. She encouraged us to document the discrimination. She joined us for another meeting with the management company.

This time our concerns were taken seriously. Meaningful dialogue began. A new application process is being written for Corbin Heights Pinnacle Heights that will be in accordance with fair housing laws.

Without the Connecticut Fair Housing Center, we would not have been able to get decisive & immediate help in understanding fair housing law and demanding that the law be observed.

You would think that housing discrimination is a thing of the past. It is not. It is alive and well in Connecticut in 2009.

Please do your part to help protect my right and the rights of my neighbors to live free from housing discrimination by restoring funding for the Connecticut Fair Housing Center to the 2010 and 2011 state budgets.

Thank you.